JIVANMUKTI AND ITS INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIAL DIMENSIONS

The Indian Philosophical Congress (38th Session, Madras 1964) Lectures 1974 - 1975

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Prof. P. SANKARANARAYANAN

I bow to that Prince of Ascetics, a great *Jīvanmukta* of contemporary times who adorns the Kāncī Kāmakoṭi Pīṭha, Jagadguru Śrī Candrasekharendra Sarasvatī Śrīpādāḥ and implore him to dower his grace on me and to enable me to write about *Jīvanmukti* and its individual and social dimensions.

Philosophy in general down the centuries has been a quest to understand the nature of Man, and the Universe in which he finds himself, their primordial origin and their final destiny. In the West, this quest has been for the most part merely theoretical, an intellectual exercise. Whether in the Hellenic and Ionian philosophies of the B.Cs or in those of the post-Christian era down to modern times, it has retained this feature without making an impact on the life and conduct of men. At best, it has influenced the attitute of the thinkers in respect of life and its problems arising out of apprehension of their nature. It has not contributed to man's transformation, to the discovery of his soul and to the attainment of his salvation. This has to be accomplished by religion and by demarcating the spheres of the two as determined by the operation of reason in the one case, and of faith in the other. Though the dividing line between philosophy and religion has been getting thinner in Western philosophy in recent years, their provinces still bear a distinct character compartmentalising the two so

that there are instances of philosophers who are not actuated by religion, and of men of religion who are not philosophers in the accepted sense of that word.

The case has been different in India. Here, from the beginning of times, if time can be said to have had a beginning at all, there has been no severance between philosophy and religion. In fact, all of what we call philosophical speculation has always had a religious purpose, namely to detach man's mind from things material and attach it to things of the spirit. Philosophy which is a view of life has never been divorced from the way of life. The aim of the Indian thinker has been to escape, as quickly as may be, from this vale of tears, from the ills of *samsāra* constituted by the recurrent cycle of birth and death and to attain immortality. Understanding that whatever is material is also mortal, that what had a beginning in time must have an end, and so cannot be enduring, and that whatever was effectuated by the operation of a cause must also suffer from a like transiency, the Indian mind was always directed, in its thought and aspiration, to achieve a state not conditioned alike in origin and in continuance by any of these factors. Thus, philosophical speculation has had a religious orientation.

In their study of man, the Indian philosophers considered him not as merely a bio-psychical entity, but as one invested with a soul which, in a manner of speaking, came from afar and whose heart and home is with Infinity and only there. A true view of human nature results from divesting man of all his physical and psychical vestment from the body starting from the sense organs through vital breath, and ultimately the mind in all its states; (for, the Indian Philosopher considers mind too as physical), and lighting upon the transempirical residuum which is pure *cit* unconditioned by anything adventitious or external, and which, in Indian religio-philosophical language, is called the Ātman.

The Indian thinker did not stop with this. He discovered and realised that this Ātman in him, or more truly that *he is*, is identical in substance in all individual men, and further, in its triple connotation of *Sat*, *Cit* and *Ānanda*, unlimited by time, unconfined by space, and unconditioned by circumstance is not different from the Supreme Source, Sustenance and Sanctuary of all things in the universe which he

called Brahman. Barring doctrinal differences which later developed on the nature of the two, the Ātman and Brahman and the relation between them, the recognition of these entities as philosophical truths which should motive human inquiry and aspiration is cardinal to Indian thought and religious endeavour.

To bring about the consummation of the human soul growing to the dimensions of the Infinite that is Brahman, Indian philosophers have prescribed certain pathways to perfection determined by the threefold constituents of human personality, intellect, feeling and will, cognising the Infinite, hankering for it and endeavouring towards it without intermission till man is divinised to the extent of the veil separating man and God being rent asunder, and, he exclaims in the ecstacy of the recollection of his realisation in the words of the mystic "Not I, but Thou." He conceives his relation with that Infinite as his disposition and inclination determine it either (i) as an *other* to It in thought and function, or (ii) as an inseparable but identifiable part of It constituting Its body along with all that there is in the world, Itself being his soul, or (iii) as non-separate yet distinguishable from It. These attitudes and approaches to the Infinite have been laid down in the three schools of philosophy known as Dvaita, Viśiṣṭādvaita and Advaita propounded by their preceptors, Śrī Madhva, Śrī Rāmānuja and Śrī Śaṁkara who gave the primacy respectively to *karma, bhakti* and *jñāna* as the ultimate means to such realisation.

Another characteristic feature of Indian Philosophy, which expression includes the determinants of religion, is that the purpose and goal of life is the attainment by man of *mukti* or liberation from the coils of *samsāra*, freed of its hardships and sorrows, shedding his finitude and entering into the plenal experience of transcendental bliss before which the joys of the mundane world pale in their lustre like a tiny candle held before the effulgent sun. This aspiration has actuated all schools of philosophy, be they classified as orthodox tracing themselves to Vedic and Vedāntic sources and relying on their authority, or as heterodox, wholly or partly divergent from them. Only their respective definitions of *mukti* and delineations of its content have differed consequent on differences in their apprehension of the basic

constituents of human nature, of the character of the Infinite and of the means leading to It.

In some philosophies, *mukti* is a far-off divine event towards which man must move and attainable after the fall of the body, at a different place from this world, while according to others, it is achievable here and now while one is alive. The one is the *Videha-mukti*, and the other is *Jīvan-mukti*. All the systems of Vedānta other than Advaita hold the doctrine of *Videha-mukti*. These include Dvaita, Viśiṣṭādvaita of both the Śaivite and the Vaiṣṇavite varieties, Bhedābheda, Acintya Bhedābheda, etc. While the concept of *jīvan-mukti* is cardinal to Advaita philosophy and is both a constituent and corollary of its central doctrine, intimations of the possibility and the fact of it are discernible in the Sāṅkhya and Buddhist philosophies also. The idea of perfection portrayed in Jainism too has affinities with the *jīvanmukta* condition.

In all the Semetic religions and theistic philosophies both in the East and the West, *mukti* is understood as *salvation* of man brought about by God Himself or by His emissary by purging him of his sins and transporting him to another region known as Heaven where he transcends the limitations of his finitude and sits by the throne of God acquiring a resplendent form and exercising superhuman and divine functions. In this process, human deserts and divine benevolence combine to bring about this consummation. There is another meaning of *mukti* as *liberation* from the sway of agencies distorting and constricting man's inherent infinitude in which he can delight if he would only see and understand himself in his native wholeness and fullness of being compacted of *sat, cit* and *ānanda*. While the former view considers man as a sinner whose sin is either inherited from an original ancestor or acquired during the course of his life, and that salvation is *conferred* on him as a reward of his merit and devotion, according to the latter view, man's finitude is not truly a fact but is a misapprehension brought about by ignorance of his true nature. In essence, man is infinite, an abridged edition, as it were, of the all-pervasive Supreme known as Brahman. He mistakes himself as finite, falsely identifies himself with factors alien to his nature, constricts himself in limiting bonds and suffers from consequent disabilities and defects which belittle and distort his exalted being and status. It

behoves him to rid himself by proper instruction and sustained reflection of the agencies and factors that cause this misapprehension of himself and come to realise, in due course, that he is not any of the things that he wrongly mistook himself for, that he is the child of immortality and that he is the ever-existent expansive Spirit who is all intelligence in and out. Such a realisation comes from a disciplined life, by the performance, without intermission, of ordained duties and meritorious acts which invoke the grace of God who dowers the aspirant, directly or otherwise, with instruction on the ultimate Reality by comprehending which, he comes to realise that he is non-different from that Reality itself. Then ensues a transport of bliss arising from the breaking of the shackles of action that would involve subjection to *samsāra*, a solution of all doubts and the liquidation of all sins. Then the individual is liberated from his finitude; he becomes a different person altogether as a result of an osmosis of nature and being. Autonomous as he is, he goes through life as an automation fully immersed in the Consciousness that is Brahman; though in the world, yet apart from it; seeing the different things before him, but not *as* different, but as only embodied specimens of the Infinite that is the sole and whole Reality. When his span of life's term is over, his physical body falls off from him like the slough of a serpent and he is then indistinguishable from Brahman which he has realised to be his nature always. His pre-mortem state of Brahman-knowledge and realisation is *jīvanmukti* and the post-mortem condition is *videhamukti*.

According to Advaita Vedānta, *janma* involving subjection to *samsāra* is due to the actions that one does, good and bad, producing *puṇya* and *pāpa*. The cause of such karmas is to be traced to *kāma* or desire which includes also aversion. *Kāma* is due to the sway of nescience on the mind which leads to a confusion between the self or ātman and the non-self or the *anātman* attributing the characteristics of the one to the other. This leads to desire for the non-ātmic things of the world thinking they are dear as the ātman. So, the successive series of *avidyā*, *kāma*, *karma* and *janma* ought to be brought to an end if one should escape the ills and woes of *samsāra*. It is *avidyā* or *ajñāna* that starts the series and it should be liquidated by *vidyā* or *jñāna*. Where there is no *ajñāna*, there is no *kāma* for non-real things; when *kāma* is absent, there is no occasion for *karma*; if there

is no *karma*, there is no *janma* again after death; for, *punarjanma* or re-birth is due to the accumulated karmas which have not so far borne fruit and the karmas that will yet be done in the remaining days of the present life. The effort towards *ajñāna-nivṛtti* or the liquidation of *ajñāna* should be made by the seeker of liberation, and the fruition of the effort can and will take place in this life itself before death. Such a person who has accomplished it is called a *jīvanmukta*, one liberated even while he is living.

The path to *jīvanmukti* which is the goal is laid along the fourfold means or *sādhana-catuṣṭaya* comprised by an initial discrimination between the eternal and the transient, absence of attachment to things both earthly and ethereal, certain disciplines of the body and the mind making for concentration and absorption, all directed to the dominant quest for liberation. Upon the acquisition of these means, the aspirant humbly approaches a competent and benevolent teacher who has knowledge and understanding of scripture and realised its truth himself, and who is interested in his spiritual welfare, obtains instruction and makes it his own by the process of hearing, thinking and reflection on it, *śravaṇa*, *manana* and *nididhyāsana*. These are said to be internal means to *mukti* while the bodily disciplines are the external means. The former arise in response to the Upaniṣadic exhortation that the ātman should be seen, heard about and reflected on. That the ātman should be 'seen' means that the Truth 'I am Brahman' should be directly realised. The means to it are *śravaṇa*, etc. *Śravaṇa* brings about knowledge of the sentences of *śruti* following competent instruction. Meditation is dwelling on these texts understanding the meaning behind them. *Nididhyāsana* is characterised by discarding contrary ideas and stabilising the mind on the accordant ones. Among these, by *śravaṇa* is removed the doubt if the *Vedānta* texts affirm Brahman without a second. Meditation removes the doubts whether the world is real or non-real, *satya* or *mithyā*, if the ātman is of the nature of bliss or not, whether it is different from the body or not, whether the *jīva* is identical with the *Paramātman* or not, whether knowledge of the nature of the ātman is the means to *mokṣa* or not, whether *jñāna* is a constituent of the *ātman* or only its adventitious quality, and such other doubts. This *manana* is the process of reasoning. It is of the following forms: If the world is real, it would falsify the *śruti* text that Brahman is only one without

a second. If the bliss character of ātman is questioned, no one will endeavour to realise one's ātman. If it is held that the body itself is the ātman, then there will be no rebirth and that will lead to the destruction of what has been done and the acquisition of what has not been done. If the identity of *jīva* and Brahman is denied, the *śruti* text "*Tattvamasi*" is contradicted. If *ātmajñāna* is not said to be the means to *mokṣa*, or if *karma* alone or *karma* and *jñāna* together be said to be the means, the text 'there is no other path to liberation' '*nānyaḥpanthā vidyate ayanāya*' conflicts with that view and becomes invalid. If the ātman is held to be *qualified* by *jñāna*, the *śruti* affirming that it is *nirguṇa* is contradicted. By these and other reasonings which constitute the process of *manana*, these doubts are dispelled. By *nididhyāsana* or deep reflection the delusion of the form '*aham ajñaḥ*', 'I am not-knowing' is removed.

Thus, when, by *śravaṇa*, etc., doubts and delusions are destroyed, there arises the direct intuitive perception: "I am Brahman" as the obstacles to it have disappeared. These obstacles are three-fold: relating to the past, to the present and to the future. (1) Remembering past worldy experiences with delight and dwelling on them is obstacle relating to the past. To overcome them, one should discard their name, form and content as mere chaff, and the truth imbedded in them should be taken as the grain. Discarding is facilitated by not dwelling on them. Concentration on the truth aids its acquisition. (2) The obstacle relating to the future is what is left as *prārabdha-karma*. This can be surmounted only by experiencing its effects as it can be expiated only after subjection to them. The residual effect of strong *kāmya-karma* is an obstacle as it produces the embodied state. The residual *nitya-karmas* (those that are obligatory of daily observance) whether they lead to fruits or no, are not obstacles to *tattvajñāna*, as they withdraw the mind from indulging in forbidden acts or *pāpa-karma*. Even the good deeds performed from a desire to attain *Brahmaloka* are obstacles of this kind. Reaching it, the aspirant attains *mokṣa* along with *Brahmā*. This is called *kramamukti*. One who does not desire to attain *Brahmā* has not to wait that long. (3) The obstacles relating to the present are of various forms like desire for sense objects, wrong reasoning and dullness of the intellect. The first of these, namely desire for sense objects is overcome by increasing practice of *śama*, *dama* and other disciplines of the kind. The tendency

to wrong reasoning is overcome by means of *śravaṇa*, etc. For the cure of dullness of the intellect, rājasic and tāmasic food should be avoided. Even then, that can be effected only gradually in this or in a future life.

When, on the absence of these obstacles and when one's *ajñāna* is destroyed by the direct and immediate perception of the form "I am Brahman", the aspirant to *mokṣa* remains as the expansive infinitude of Brahman whose nature is *sat*, *cit*, and *ānanda*. He gets the realisation that he has been that Brahman always, gets over his false identification with factors alien to his true nature and goes about immersed in supreme felicity. Then all traces of *ajñāna* pertaining to his *jīva*-hood vanish by the knowledge that he has attained from his *guru* who enlightened him on the scripture texts. This Brahman-realisation or *Brahma-sākṣātkāra* or *Ātma-sākṣātkāra* is called *mokṣa* or liberation from finitude.

This *sākṣātkāra* can be obtained by a person even when he is living, here and now, as there are no obstacles to it. It is this that is called *jīvanmukti*. As stated in the *Varāhopaniṣad*: "At the very time that the yogi realises his ātman, from that moment he is a *jīvanmukta*."

Yasmin kāle svamātmānam yogī jānāti kevalam |
tasminkālāt samārabhya jīvanmukto bhavedasau ||

The difference of view in the concept of *mukti* in Advaita Vedānta from those in other schools is based on the difference in the understanding of human nature and that of the Infinite that is Brahman. While all schools agree in repudiating *dehātmabuddhi* which identifies the ātman with the body, in their view of the nature of the *jīva*, they differ from Advaita and from one another. The ātman which, according to Advaita, is expansive, *vibhu*, is *cit-svarūpa*, an entity which is all-intelligence and so non-different always from Brahman which alike in its *baddhāvasthā* and *mukti*, in bondage and liberation, is *prajñānaghana*. Only, in the former state, owing to misapprehension arising from the operation of *ajñāna* which vitiates the true perception of the *ātman* and distorts it into appearing as something other, there is a mistaking and/or forgetting of its nature with consequent feeling of bondage and misery. True liberation and freedom consist in the recollection of one's nature on being told about it by one interested in

the person's welfare. Since the proximate cause of such liberation is the knowledge of the ātman's nature, such knowledge is the cause of liberation as it alone brings about *ātmasākṣātkāra*, intuitive perception of the ātman and its non-difference from Brahman.

Granted that bondage or *saṁsāra* is due to ignorance of one's essential nature, it follows that the removal of that ignorance *ipso facto* annuls that bondage and secures liberation. The opposite of *ajñāna* is *jñāna*. While the former is *anādi* or beginningless in time being coeval with the *jīva's* appearance as such, it will disappear on the dawn of *jñāna*, the latter being opposed to it as light is to darkness. If this *jñāna* is to be acquired as means to liberation, it must be by the individual himself who is subject to *ajñāna* and also, that is important, in the very life when it is operating. The effect of *jñāna* which removes *ajñāna* must be perceived and felt immediately as the dispeller of darkness and perceivable at once. It is not, and cannot be postponed to a later time and subsequent condition ensuing after death. If *mukti* is a consequence of *jñāna*, it must occur simultaneously with it. There cannot be a postponement or a time interval between the two, or difference in the region of its effectuation.

Among other schools of Vedānta that do not accept the possibility of *jīvanmukti*, one holds that the bondage or *saṁsāra* is due to an initial mistaken apprehension of the nature of the *jīva* as an independent real, as a *svatantra*, forgetting that its reality is derivative from its being an *aṁśa* of the Supreme who supports and rules over it. For another type of Vedānta, the *jīva's* relation is external to God and its office is only to serve Him as His servant or *kiṅkara* and to delight in such service both on earth and in heaven. So, the common factor in both these schools is a forgetting of the nature of the *jīva*, the consciousness of which is to be restored through *jñāna*. The only question is whether such *jñāna* is the direct and immediate means to *mokṣa* or it is the indirect means to it through the agency of some other intervening factor which it generates. In either case, the office of *jñāna* in effecting liberation must be accepted immediately or mediately. If the Advaitic view that the *jīva* is an abridgement of Brahman in the confines of his body like space enclosed in a jar is accepted, and that the knowledge of it reveals to the *jīva* his kinship in terms of identity with infinite space, then this knowledge must immediately

invest him with the perception and experience of that infinite. This perception accruing to him while in the present embodied state confers on him the character of a *jīvanmukta*, liberated even when alive. He becomes a new self, free from the doubts and delusions of his former state. He becomes enlightened. He has no more the experience of duality. Being a *Brahmavit*, he is that Brahman Itself. *Brahmavit Brahmaiva bhavati.* '*bhavati*' does not mean here 'becomes' for that word would mean that he was not Brahman before, but becomes that Brahman on 'becoming' a Brahmavit. '*bhavati*' is the third person singular present tense form of the root *bhū*, *bhav* to be or become. '*bhavati*' is to be understood in the first sense of *being* and not of *becoming*. The former indicates a permanent condition, the latter a change of state in time. The *jīva* as the ātman essentially has been Brahman always, only, he does not know or has forgotten it. The purpose of *śruti* and of the *guru* is to effect the recollection of his nature as Brahman, then and now and always.

The examples of the *vyādhavardhita rājakumāra* and of *Rādheya Karṇa* are usually given to explain this. The prince has always been a prince even when he thought by mistake that he was a hunter's son; but he realised his real nature when told about it by the king's men. *Rādheya* was *Kaunteya* even when he believed he was a *sūtaputra*, but realised he was *Kaunteya* when told by Kunti. If the *jīva* under delusion and ignorance thinks himself as different from Brahman and realises his Brahman-nature that he thus apprehends by the removal of erstwhile misapprehension, this realisation must come immediately on the removal of his *ajñāna* and cannot wait for a later time and another place. This is a necessary consequence of the premise that the bondage of *saṁsāra* is due to *ajñāna*.

In the case of those schools that hold a different view of the *jīva* and of *mukti*, it deserves to be urged that the *jīva* who has practised and perfected *bhakti* as a dependent *aṁśa* of God, subject to His overlordship cannot be and is not the same as his former self. The saint of religion who is suffused with God-consciousness, who is, as it is said, God-intoxicated, has a general family resemblance to the *jīvanmukta* in his preoccupation, whole and entire, with the Infinite, by whatsoever name it is called. No more do the things of the earth entice him or hold his attention; but, he dwells in infinity delighting in the

contemplation of that Infinite. Space and Time do not limit his being; though in the world he is not of it. Every saint of religion is thous a *jīvanmukta* throwing away the bonds of his finitude, living, though as a *part* of the world, yet *apart* from it. The mental climate of the saint of religion is not far removed from that of the *jīvanmukta* who, in his state of *samādhi,* like the mystic *par excellence,* has no consciousness of difference or of personal individuality. The activities of the *jīvanmukta* in his *vyutthāna* state are like those of the mystic that has lapsed back to world-consciousness. In both cases, there is a metamorphosis of being. They do not live and act as the same persons again. In the last verse of the tenth decade of Śrī Nammāḷvār's *Tiruvaimoḷi,* in fact, the last words that he utters describing his state are நீ என்னை அவாவறச் சூழ்ந்தாயே, Vaiṣṇavite theologians and commentators understand this decade, and particularly, the last verse, as having been spoken by the Āḷvār on his way to *Paramapada* and when, reaching it, he had a transcendental *aprākṛta* soul-sight of God. We believe that we would not be doing any violence to his experience if his reference to his being enveloped whole and entire by God, negating any trace of finitude, could equally well be applied to the last days of his sojourn on earth when, in the Advaitic sense, he became a *jīvanmukta.*

Analogous to the distinction of *jīvanmukti* and *videhamukti* is a similar distinction in Buddhism as *Nirvāṇa* and *Paranirvāṇa.* While the latter can be realised only at death with the dissolution of the body, *Nirvāṇa* can be realised and enjoyed during life. *Nirvāṇa* itself is defined as the flow of faultless states of consciousness. It is positive blessedness, not an abyss of annihilation. It is of two kinds—what is *upādhiśeṣa* and what is *anupādiśeṣa.* The first is the condition of a perfect saint where the five skandhas are still present, though the desires which attract are extinct. Those who have attained this kind of *nirvāṇa* are free whose external life continues. In *Anupādiśēṣa* or *Paranirvāṇa,* all physical being is extinct consequent on the death of the saint. He is a free man whose external life ceases. This is final release when even the skandhas which constitute empirical existence have totally ceased. Through the destruction of all that is individual in us, we enter into communion with the whole universe. The horizon of being is extended to the limits of reality. It is a kind of existence devoid of egoity, full of 'confidence, peace, calm, bliss, happiness, delicacy,

purity and freshness.' In *nirvāṇa*, the soul loses its individuality and lapses into the objective whole. It is becoming one with eternal reality which Buddha does not explicitly admit. Only, since it is beyond the horizon of human thought, we are obliged to use negative terms to describe it, a feature reminiscent of the *neti neti* manner of referring to Brahman in Vedānta. It is a condition transcending subject-object relations. If we make a difference between *arhatship* and the *Bodhisattva* ideal, the former may be comparable to *jīvanmukti* and the latter to *videhamukti*.

On the subject of intimations of the *jīvanmukti* in Jainism Professor Hiriyanna writes as follows: "If through proper self-discipline all *karma* is worked out, and there arises the 'full blaze of omniscience' in the *jīva*, it becomes free. When at last it escapes at death from the bondage of the body, it rises until it reaches the top of the universe described as *lokākāśa*'; and there it rests in peaceful bliss for ever." It may not care for worldly affairs thereafter, but it is certainly not without its own influence; for it still will serve even afterwards as an example of achieved ideal to those that are still struggling towards it. During the period intervening between enlightenment and actual god-head—for all liberated souls are gods—the enlightened *jīva* dwells apart from fresh kārmic influence. An enlightened person may lead an active life, but his activity does not taint him as even unselfish activity, according to Jainism, does in the case of others. During the interval, the devotee, as in Buddhism, is termed an *arhant* and he becomes *siddha* or 'the perfected' one actually liberated. It will be seen from this that the arhantship corresponds to the Hindu ideal of *jīvanmukti* and the Buddhistic one of *nirvāṇa* as distinct from *parinirvāṇa*."

In Śaṅkhya, where the ideal is *Kaivalya* or aloofness from *prakṛti* and all its transformations, the self escapes from the realm of suffering. The immediate cause of this is *viveka* or discriminating knowledge which removes the cause of bondage. Such knowledge is not mere blind belief that *prakṛti* is different from *puruṣa*. It should become immediate experience. The Truth should be known by practical, not simply by theoretical reason. Thus, in this doctrine also, as in Advaita, *ajñāna* is the cause of suffering, and *jñāna* removes it by enlightenment.

Yoga makes a distinction between *samprajñāta* and *asamprajñāta-samādhi*. In the latter, there is absolute suppression and stilling of the

mind, it is a super-conscious condition taking one beyond normal psychic life. Professor Hiriyanna observes that "we pass in it to the realm of mysticism." Having reached this stage, when his span of life is over, "the person attains *Kaivalya* once for all and there is no return thence. But this is goal of life in the eschatological sense (*videha-mukti*). There is another that can be reached in this life, namely *jīvanmukti* in which condition the *puruṣa* continues to be related to the *buddhi*; but it is the *buddhi* which has been purged of its defects and is fully enlightened."

In nirvikalpa Samādhi 'there is continuous consciousness of the unity of ātman with Brahman. There is no longer any identification of the ātman with its coverings. All sense of duality is obliterated. There is pure unified consciousness. The man who is well established in this consciousness in said to be illumined'.

Nyāya-vaiśeṣika philosophy does not formally recognise *jīvanmukti* like other systems, but a stage corresponding to it, when a person has succeeded in obtaining enlightenment though he has not become free in the technical sense is admitted. Such a person will not be divorced from his physical and mental adjuncts; "but narrow love and hate will have disappeared from him altogether along with the selfish activity that proceeds from them."

Thus, it will be seen in almost all systems of Indian Philosophy the idea of *jīvamukti* is present either directly or in the form of approximation to it upholding Swami Vivekananda's definition of Religion (which is not different from Philosophy) that it is the manifestation of the divinity already inherent in man and his insistence that religion is for realisation now and here, and vindicates both the validity and possibility of *jīvanmukti*.

In mukti, the individual remains in his native effulgence without the *sajātīya*, *vijātīya* and *svagata bhedas*, difference of the same kind, or of another kind, and internal differences. As there is no *other* to the *mukta*, there is neither joy nor sorrow in that state. As the *antaḥkaraṇa* has been erased, there is no *upādhi* making for any kind of enjoyment. So, the knower of Brahman remains as Brahman, *brahmavit bahmaiva bhavati*. Such a one, after the fall of the body, is not touched by what is pleasant or unpleasant; *aśarīram vāva santam priyāpriye na spṛśataḥ*, says the *Chāndogya śruti*.

Then, when the *prārabdhā-karma* which includes the good and the evil karmas, has been exhausted by subjection to it and undergoing the effects of its operation, after that, in due time, occurs *videha-mukti*, *i.e.*, continuation of the state of *mukti* without the limitation of the body. As the *Muktikopaniṣad* has it :

prārabdha kṣayaparyantam jīvanmuktā bhavanti te
tataḥ kālavasādeva prārabdhe tu kṣayamgate
vaidehīm māmakīm muktim yānti nāstyatra samśayaḥ
jīvanmuktapadam tyaktvā svadehe kālasātkṛte
viśatyadehamuktitvam pavano spandatāmiva

Again, the *Ātmopaniṣad* says :

ghate naṣṭe yathā vyoma vyomaiva bhavatisvayam.

*The *mukta*, the one who has achieved liberation, is said to have fearlessness : *abhayam vai brahma bhavati*. Yāñavalkya says to Janaka : *abhayam janaka prāptosi*. For, fear arises only from a second to oneself. *dvitīyadvāi bhayam bhavati*. So, in the state of *mukti* there is *atyantābhava* of *bhaya*, absolute non-existence of fear. " When there is the apprehension of connection with a second object, somehow or other there will arise fear. There is no apprehension of connection with a second object for the *mukta*. Such apprehension, where it can be said to exist, is said to be of two kinds for the *mukta*, from his own point of view and from another's point of view. We have seen that *mukti* itself is of two kinds, *jīvanmukti* and *videhamukti*. The absence of the apprehension connected with a second object may be due to one of three factors : (a) because there is no second object at all ; (b) even if it exists, as there is no connection with it, and (c) even if there is a connection, there is no apprehension of that connection. Since that apprehension is of two kinds, *svadṛṣṭyā*, from one's own point of view and *paradṛṣṭyā*, from an other's point of view, and as each of these may be spoken of both for the *jīvanmukta* and the *videhamukta*, combining these distinctions, we can get twelve possibilities in respect of a second object. Which of these arises and which does not for a *mukta*? For the *videhamukta*, from his own point of view, there is no second object.

* For this and the succeeding paragraphs of the existence of *dvitīya vastu* for the jīvanmukkta and his performing action I am indebted to the work ADVAITĀMODA by Vāsudeva Śāstri Abhyankar. (Āndasrama Samskrt Series 84).

Then how will connection with it or the apprehension of that connection ever arise? How does the other man, the non-*mukta* or the *baddha* apprehend the connection of the *videhamukta* with a second object as non-existing? When there is no mirror to reflect it, there is no reflection of the original object. *Buddhi* and *ahankāra* stand in the place of the mirror. In *videhamukti*, these reflecting media are absent. The *jīva* is the reflection of Brahman in these upadhis. When the reflecting media are absent, how can there be the reflection of the *videhamnkta* as *jīva* on any other person. Therefore, how can there be the apprehension of a connection with a second object even from another's point of view?

In the case of the *jīvanmnkta*, he is characterised by *buddhi* and other upādhis which are the reflecting media. So, the appearance in the form of *jīva* which is reflection is inescapable for him. When there is such a second object, connection with it cannot be denied. As the *jīvanmukta* appears to himself as the *jīva* and there is connection with a second object, its apprehension by him from his own point of view or another's point of view must be accepted. Then it must be considered what is the nature of that apprehension. The bound *jīva* does not apprehend it as *reflection* of the *ātman* on *buddhi* and the *antaḥkaraṇa*, but, as the *original* that is *jīva*. Not so the *jīvanmukta*. A sparrow looking at its own reflection in the mirror does not know it is a reflection, but, takes it to be a sparrow and pecks at the mirror at the point of the reflection. Even so, the bound *jīva*, even though he is a reflection of the *ātman* in the *upādhi* which is the reflecting medium, acts in the world, taking and discarding things. But, compared to the sparrow, man knows the truth that it is only a reflection and seeing in it a black spot, and examines if the blemish is to be traced to the original or to the reflection. In the same way, in contrast to the bound *jīva*, who is in the position of the sparrow in the illustration, the *jīvanmukta* who is like the man looking at the sparrow has greater knowledge, sees the reflection of the Paramātman in the upādhis, knows that it is *jīva*, the reflection. Even as a man seeing the black spot in the reflection, knowing that it is not in the original face, but only in the reflection, does not get agitated, so too does the *jīvanmukta*, knowing that the *caitanya* is not affected by the upādhis and that whatever is other than the *caitanya* is the reflection, remain unconcerned with the activities and effects of the upādhis. Children out of ignorance think that the black spot that they find in the reflection is to be traced to the original. To

disabuse them of that misapprehension, the elderly person not affected by that ignorance wipes the mirror clean to show that the defect seen in the reflection is due to the defect in the mirror and removes their delusion.

Thus the *jīvanmukta,* even after *Brahmasākṣātkāra* has to reckon with the reflection of the ātman in the *buddhi* and other upādhis due to the sway of *prārabdha-karma* in consonance with his earlier saṁskāras till death. But he does not act with his ego-sense knowing, as he does, that it pertains to the reflection in the upādhis.

The question has been raised if the *jīvanmukta* performs action, and, if he does, it is contended that he is not a *mukta.* This objection has taken such extreme forms as : Does he not eat? Does he not bathe ? It is also contended that he cannot refrain from action, particularly from the nitya-karmas the performance of which is obligatory for an individual, though if he does not do kāmya-karmas. It is also said that whatever action he performs militates against his muktā-hood. On this, it is worthwhile to remember what the Lord said in the *Gītā*:

Yastvātmaratireva syādātma-tṛptiścamānavaḥ
ātmanyeva ca santuṣṭaḥ tasya kāryam na vidyate
naiva tasya kṛteārtho nākṛteneha kaścana
na cāsya sarvabhūteṣu kaścidartha vyapāśrayaḥ.

Śrī Śaṅkara comments on this śloka as follows:-

"He who delights only in the ātman, not in sense objects, who is contented with the enjoyment of the ātman, and not of food, flavour, etc. — such a one is verily a *sannyāsin.* He is engrossed only in the ātman. People are pleased with material things. Not he. Being without desire everywhere, he is centred in the ātman. For such a one delighting in the Paramātman, there is nothing to be gained by action. Nor is there loss by what he does not do. He does not depend in anyway on material things by and for which actions are done?'

Even if the *jīvanmukta* does any action, his mind is not concentrated on it and he is not motived by any objective. He acts as an automaton. Discussing the question whether a *jīvanmukta* acts, Śrī Vāsudeva Abhyankar has this to say : Does a liberated person act or not? If he sees the world of objects, then, he reacts to them; if he does not see them, he does not do any action. The *videhamukta* does not see anything. He does not act. It is said :

Where everything is the ātman, what shall he see and by what? The *jivanmukta* does not see anything in *samādhi* having no consciousness of the outer world. At other times, he appears as seeing. Then he does action. Action is of two kinds, *buddhipurassaram* and *abuddhipurassaram*, done with awareness and done without such awareness. That done for oneself is again of two kinds, for the maintenance of the body and for personal glorification. The former is seeking alms due to the prompting of hunger. That happens to the *jīvanmukta*. The latter is *yāga*, etc., for attaining heaven. This is never done by him as he is free from all desire. That done for others too is of two kinds. The first is service to others, the second, to set an example to other people so that they may do likewise. This is called *lokasaṅgraha*. Both these actions are done by the *jīvanmukta*. But the ignorant mistake such actions as flowing from self-interest. Action done without awareness again is of two kinds. One kind of *karma* is not known when it is done, like the movements of the hands and feet during sleep. The other kind is so known; for instance inhaling and exhaling breath. Both these forms of *karma* take place for a *jīvanmukta*. But whatever action he does is so only when he comes out from his samādhi to consciousness of the world. Even then, he does not act like other persons with his ego-sense. As there is no sense of agency and attachment to action, it does not cause any bondage of *saṁsāra*. Though seeming to act like other persons, he does not really act; simply action takes place. Thus, though done by the *jīvanmukta*, it is as good as not done by him. In fact, actions are of two kinds, *prakṛtijam* and *sankalpajam*, those take place by the compulsions of Nature and those done by human purpose and will. The former are acts like breathing, eating and evacuating; they are involuntary. The latter refer to voluntary actions to bring out a desired result. The acts of a jīvanmukta are of the former kind and not of the latter.

An objection to the doctrine of *jīvanmukti* is the assumed incompatibility of liberation and embodiment. How can holding body and seeing the world coexist with release? The presence of the body does not affect one who is liberated. He carries it without any cosciousness of it. It has the same relation to him as the cast off slough of a serpent. He does not see or react to the body as others do. Fixed in the *ātman* as he is in *samādhi*, he does not see the physical world, and his body which is a part of it. When he is awake to the world coming

out of his *samādhi*, he sees it not as different from the ātman in which he was engrossed in *samādhi*, but, only as an expression of the consciousness in which he has been dwelling in as such consciousness runs through them all.

The world including his body *appears*; but, he knows that the appearance is not the reality. Of the two powers of *ajñāna*, *āvaraṇa*, concealment, and *vikṣepa*, projection, the first hides Brahman from being known and the second projects what is not Brahman as if it were real. The concealment of the rope is due to *āvaraṇa*, and its appearance as the snake is due to *vikṣepa*. By the *jñāna* that the *jīvanmukta* has acquired, the *āvaraṇa-śakti* of *avidyā* has been annulled giving place to Ātman or Brahman-consciousness; but the *vikṣepa-śakti* still functions causing the world to appear along with his body. But, the difference is that while the ordinary man takes the body to be real, the *jīvanmukta* knows it to be a mere appearance (*mithyā*) which is falsely real, and really false. His body exists for him as the result of his *prārabvha-karma* and will continue during the pendancy of its operation. When that ceases, the body will fall off of its own accord, and he becomes the *videhamukta*. So from the *jīvanmukta's* point of view, his body is as good as non-existent. He does not reckon with it or react to its stimuli as the ordinary man does. It is like a garland round the neck of a cow. The cow is unconcerned about it. The body is not an impediment to the ātman-consciousness of the *jīvaumukta*. In fact, he does not go in quest of food for the body: he eats what his *prārabdha* brings him. A great example of such a *jīvanmukta* in recent times was Śrī Śeshādri Swāmigal who was practically fed by other people and never ate in the accepted sense of that word• For the exhaustion of the *prārabdha*, no special effort is needed on the part of the *jīvanmukta*. It expires of itself. When its force is exhausted, the *sañcita-karmas* having been reduced to ashes in the fire of *jñāna* and the *āgāmi-karmas* not stickting to him as he has neither *kartṛtva* or *bhoktṛtva* in respect of them, his body falls down. There i no residual *karma* to precipitate another *janma* and he becomes one with Brahman. He is enveloped in Brahman-consciousness, his individuality being dissolved in Brahman. He is one with Brahman as the *ghaṭākāśa* is *ipso facto* the *mahākāśa* when the sides of the confining pot are broken. Thus, the *jīvanmukta* who is alive in the physical

word carries the body without a consciousness of owning it. The presence or absence of the body has nothing to do with liberation.

Since a person can be said to be liberated when he is alive, such *jīvanmukti* must not be understood to be qualitatively different from *videhamukti*. They are not, as Śrī Sureśvarācārya and Śrī Vidyāraṇya Svāmi have cautioned us, two kinds of *mukti*, *jīvanmukti* and *videhamukti*. *Mukti* is one, breaking of the shackles of *saṁsāra* which is a consequence of liquidation of *ajñāna* and attainment of *jñāna*. In fact, the *jñāna* which is the cause of *mukti* in the embodied state persists in the character of pure and plenal intelligence on the *jīvanmukta* becoming *videha*. As we saw, one may attain liberation and yet be embodied. When the body falls off at death, the liberation persists as before. There is no diminution or accretion in the quality or quantum of liberation. Liberation is *one*, and there are not *two* kinds of it, with the body in the present life and without it when the body is destroyed. The only difference is that in one case the body exists, in the other it does not. In the case of the *jīvanmukta*, his reaction to the objects of the world is as of one in sleep. Everything is non-existent for him, because consciousness as a knowing agency in the triple distinction of knower, what is known and the knowing process does not arise. The pure *cit* which is self-efflugent alone remains. In sleep, though there is no apprehending consciousness while it subsists, future apprehending capability is in the seed and sprouts on waking. Not so for the *jīvanmukta*. For him, there is no qualitative difference from the *videhamukta* state.

The advantages that accrue from *jīvanmukti* are enumerated as *gñānarakṣā tapaḥ, visaṁvādaḥ, dukḥanivṛttiḥ* and *sukhāvirbhāvaḥ*. The non-arising of doubt or wrong ideas in respect of the *Brahmasākṣātkāra* that has taken place is *jñānarakṣā*. In accordance with the statement *saṁśayātma vinaśyati* : one who is subject to doubt is lost, it is easy to ward off such doubt and the fall on account of it in the *jīvanmukti* state. By that, as no mental modifications arise, there is one-pointedness of the mind. That one-pointed concentration itself is called tapas : *mansasca indriyāṇām hyekāgṛvam paramam tapaḥ*. The sage Bhṛgu in the *Taittirīya Śruti* says : *tapasā brahma vijigñāsasva* and then, Vāruṇi, *tapastaptvā*. He concentrated on Brahman. In consequence, when the *jīvanmukta* who had been engrossed in internal

Brahman consciousness of *Brahmānubhava* comes out of it to an awareness of the world which state is called *vyutthāna-daśā*, even if criticised or derided by anybody, he is not disturbed by any accordant *cittavṛtti*, and he is not subject to any kind of *visaṁvāda* or grief or disappointment. For it is said :

jñātvā vayam tattve niṣṭham nānu modāmahe vayam,
anusocāma evānyān nabhrāntair vividāmahe.

Thus all delusions vanish for the *jīvanmukta*. His mind is one pointed and cncentrated on his ātman. Even if there is residual *prarābdha* which he has to undergo, no grief attaches to him. For, he has no desires or aversions which by their non-fulfilment or affecting the mind can cause him any affliction. In contrast, in the *jīvanmukta* state, by the ceaseless practice of *jñānayoga*, the concealment of the ātman caused by *avidyā* is annulled and there arises, instead, the bliss of the unalloyed intuitive experience of Brahman whole and entire. This is *sukhāvirbhāvaḥ* that accrues to the *jīvanmukta*. The bliss is indescribable in words and must be known only by experience of it. It is significant in this connection that His Holiness Jagadguru Śri Candraśekhara Bhāratī who wrote a commentary on Śrī Śaṅkara's *Vivekacūdamaṇi* refrained from elucidating the ślokas 516 to 581 of that work dealing with the *jīvanmukta* state. When requested to complete the commentary, His Holiness declared :

vaktavyā atraiva samgrahitāḥ nididhyāsanamantarā ṇādhunānyatrā cittam vyāpṛṇoti.

" Whatever has to be said has been conveyed in these pages ; my mind cannot now engage in anything else than profound meditation. "

That *jīvanmukti* is possible of realisation and that it is a fact of spiritual life is clearly stated in *śruti*, *smṛti* and the *purāṇas*. To start with *śruti*, the *Kaṭhavalli* says : " *vimuktaśca vimucyate* ". The word *vimuktaḥ* occurring as the first word of the sentence means ' one who has been liberated ' : ' vimucyate ', occurring later means ' is liberated '. There is no meaning in saying that one who has been liberated is liberated. It becomes intelligible only when it is understood as

jīvanneva dṛtha bandhanādibhir muktassan dehapāte bhava bandhanāt viśeṣena mucyate: He who is liberated absolutely from the beginningless bondage of the body even while he is living is also liberated upon death from future bonds also completely. In the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* it is stated: *yadā sarve pramucyante kāmā ye asya hṛdi śthitāh atha martyo amṛto bhavati atrabrahma samaśnute.* He in whom all the desires resident in the heart are given up, that mortal becomes immortal; he realises Brahman here. *atra* here, means *in the existing body*. Immediately upon the firm acquisition of knowledge of the Truth about the ātman, the person attains Brahman. Again it is said: *sacakṣuh acakṣuriva, sakarṇo'karṇa iva samanā amanā iva saprāṇo' praṇa iva*: Though with eyes, as if with out them; though with ears, as if without them; though with the mind, as if without it, though with breath as if without it. Though from his point of view the *jñāni* for whom all *adhyāsas*, born of nescience, have disappeared is without eyes, ears, mind and breath, from the point of view of other people, till his *prāradbdha* lasts the *jīvanmukta appears* as if *sacakṣuh*, as *sakarṇah*, as *samanāḥ* and as *saprānaḥ*. Again, *Taittirīya Upaniṣad* says: *yato vāco nivartante aprāpya manasā saha ānandam brahmaṇo vidvān na bibhete kutaścana.* He who is immersed in the experience of secondless Brahman from which speech returns with the mind without attaining it, does not fear anything. For, in that state he has no experience of a second object. For, *dvitīyāt vai bhayam bhavati.* The word vidvān refers to one who is living. Still another *Upaniṣad* says: *yasmin sarvāṇi bhūtāni ātmaiva abhūt vijānataḥ tatra ko mohaḥ kaḥ śokaḥ ekatvam anupaśyataḥ.* It is only upon the perception of duality that delusion and grief arise. The expressions *anupaśyataḥ, vijānataḥ* can be used only of one who is living, to indicate that he knows and sees *ekatvam* even while he is alive. And again, *evam vijānan ātmaratiḥ ātmakrīdaḥ ātma mithunaḥ ātmanāndaḥ sa svarāt bhavati. Ātmaratiḥ, ātmakrīḍaḥ,* etc., apply to a person who is referred to as *evam vijānan* which expression implies he knows while he is in the body as there can be no knowing process after he is dead. The *jīvanmukta*, living in the world appears like other people; but, from his own point of view, he is bereft of the consciousness of the body and of its bonds.

In the *Jñāna Vāsiṣṭa*, the sage Vasiṣ a observes:

nṛṇām jñānaikaniṣṭhānām ātmajñāna vicārinām sa jīvanmuktodeti videhamukteva yā.

For those who are firmly established only in jñāna, there arises *jīvanmukti* and later *videhamukti*. *Jñānaika niṣṭhatvam* is explained by Śri Vidyarāṇya Svāmin as *laukika vaidika karmatyāgaḥ*, prefaced by the abandonment of secular and religious rites and engaged solely in *ātmavicāra*, and he goes on to detail the characteristics of a *jīvanmukta*. In the *Bhagavadgītā* too the Lord speaks at length of the qualities of a *jīvanmukta* characterising him as *sthitaprajña, guṇātita, sthitadhīḥ, muni*, etc.

The distinction between *jīvanmukta* and *videhamukta* is brought in the Lord's words :

sthita prajñasya kā bhaṣa samādhisthasya keśava
sthitadhīh kim prabhāṣeta kim āsita vrajeta kim.

How is the *sthitaprajñā* spoken of? Śrī Śaṅkara explains *kā bhaṣā* as *paraiḥ kattham bhāṣyate*, i.e., *kīdṛśaiḥ lakṣana vācakaiḥ sabdaiḥ ayam bhāṣyate*. This part of the *śloka* refers to the *videhamukta*. For, he cannot speak as he is without a body. *na bhāṣati kintu bhāṣyate eva*. In the second half of the śloka the reference is to one who has come out of the *samādhi*. What does he do? How are his sitting and walking different from those of others? After explaining *prajñā* in the word, *sthitaprajña*, as *tattvajnānam*, Śrī Vidyaraṇya Svami says: *tatra stthitaprajñaḥ kāla bhedāt dvivhidaḥ samāhito vyutthitasca tayorubhayor-lakṣaṇam pūrvottarābhyām ardhābhyām pṛcchati. Stthita prajñasya kā bhāṣā kīdrsaiḥ lakṣana vācakaih śabdaiḥ ayam bhāṣyate, vyutthtita prājñaḥ kīdrk vyavahāram karoti, tasyopaveśa gamanam mandebhyo vilakṣaṇam kīdṛśam.* The succeeding verses in Chpater II and the well-known ones in the XII Chapter describe the characteristics of a *stthitaprajña*, his attitudes and actions which can only pertain to one who is embodied and yet liberated, a *jīvanmukta*. Such a one is spoken of as *ativarṇā-śrami*. He is beyond all castes, and all *aśramas*. He is bound by no law or rule of conduct. What he does is right, for he cannot do wrong. He is not subject to prescriptions and prohibitions. *nistraiguṇye patthi vicaratām ko vidhiḥ ko niṣedhaḥ* For those who disport in the realms beyond the sway of the guṇas how can there be command or forbiddance. In the words of Nārada :

smartvayah satatam Viṣṇuḥ vismartavya no jātu cit
sarve vidhi niṣedāḥ syuretayoreva kinkarāh.

'Commands and prohibitions are servants of such great devotees of God'.

Thus the *jīvanmukta* does not engage himself in any action in his absorption in Brahman. Even if he does, the hold of his concentration in Brahman is not loosened even a bit. Śrī Rāmakrṣṇa Paramahamsa compares this to the mental condition of a maid-servant who, working in her mistress's house, goes through the chores mechanically, her mind all the while being centred in her baby at her own house. Śrī Vidyāraṇya has another telling illustration. Even as a lady who loves her paramour thinks only of him while engaging in all her actions, and her domestic duties are forgotten by her, the jīvanmukta is one who has acquired distaste for things of the world. His mind is swayed by the fruits of supreme yoga and the consciousness of the Truth holds his mind like a paramour in the other case.

In addition to the *śruti* and the *smṛti*, the *purāṇas* too hold out instances of great *jīvanmuktas* like Śuka, Vāmadeva, Prahlāda, Nārada and the like who were *jīvanmuktas* even from birth and passed their days as shining examples of the character of a *jīvanmukta* so elaborately delineated by Śrī Krṣṇa.Were not the great saints of religion who were habitually immersed in God-consciousness like the Gopīs of Brindāvan, Rāmdas, Kabirdās, Narsi Mehta, Mīrābai, Purandaradāsa, Tyāgaraja and our galaxy of Saivite Nāyanmars and Vaiṣnavaite Ālvārs, Rāmakriṣna Paramahamsa and Ramana Mahaṛṣi, jīvanmuktas in the full sense of that expression? Did we not have an outstanding jīvanmukta in Śri Sadāśiva Brahmendra of Nerur and in T.H. Jagadguru Nṛsimha Bhāratī and Śri Candrasekhara Bhāratī of Sringeri? Does not our worshipful Paramācārya of Kānchi stand out among us as a shining *jīvanmukta*? And, we have the self-certification of *jīvanmkti* in the bold and authoritative words of Śri Śankara in his Sūtra Bhāṣya:

Api ca naivātra vividatavyam brahmavidā kincit kālam śarīram dhriyate na va dhriyate iti. Katham hi ekasya svahṛdaya pratyayam brahmavedanam ca apareṇa pratikṣeptum śakyate. Śrutismrtiṣu ca stthitaprajñalakṣana nirdeśena etadeva nirucyate.

'No difference of opinion is possible here as to whether the body is retained (after knowledge) for sometime or not by the knowers of Brahman. For, when somebody feels in his heart (Śri Śankara here refers to himself) that he has realised Brahman and yet holds the body, how can this be denied by somebody else? This very fact is elaborated in the Upaniṣads and Smṛtis in the course of determining the characteristics of the man of steady wisdom." Thus *jīvanmukti* is not a fanciful theory, but a realised and realisable fact, expounded in the śāstraic texts, logically following from accepted premises and vouched for in the personal experience of the great jñānis of our land, not to speak of others who had like experiences, of saintly persons of other religions like Jalaludin Rumi and St. Francis of Assisi and in other climes. *Śruti* declares it, *yukti* proves it, and *anubhava* confirms it beyond doubt.

How does the *jivanmukta* spend his days? Instead of saying, "How does he spend his days?" it will be truer to ask, "How do his days pass?" On this, Śri Niscaladaśa in his *Vicāra Sāgara* says: Of the three kinds of adhikaris, *uttama*, *madhyama*, and *adhama*, whom the guru instructs, the *uttamādhikari* alone gets *Brahmasākṣātkāra*. (He becomes a *jīvanmukta*). Even as the dry leaves that have fallen off a tree are scattered here and there, the body of the Jñāni doing actions by the force of the *prārabdha-karma* appears as if led here and there. Sometimes getting upon a chariot, horses or elephants, he sees forests and gardens. At other times, even without sandals to protect his feet, he goes about here and there. His bed and food too are what chance may bring him. Sometimes, they are of the superior kind. Sometimes, without anything to eat and not caring about it, he lives in the caves of mountains, lying on the hard rock without food and spends the night there. Sometimes, men in hundreds prostrate before him; sometimes he is derided by those devoted to karmas as not having both this world and the next. There is nothing anywhere which he has to do as a duty. Those who honour and worship him get the merit of his good deeds; those that see him to find fault with him, they become victims to his sins. Thus a jñāni's course of life is unpredictable. Those like him who have known the Truth and seen it (*tattva-vidaḥ*) are not afflicted by doubt or by sorrow. For all their doubts and sorrows have been destroyed in their entirety. They have achieved the highest enlightenmet of the identity of the *pratyagātman* and

Brahman which is self-effulgent, a fact vouched by the pramāṇas of *śruti*, *yukti*, accordant reasoning, and *anubhava*, confirming intuitive realisation. Śrī Śaṅkara has this to say of a *jīvanmukta* in his *Vivekacūdamaṇi*. "Freed from awareness of any external object by reason of his ever being of the nature of Brahman, consuming only what is needed for his bodily sustenance offered to him by others like one in sleep or like a child, looking at this world when he comes out to external sight like one in a dream, remains the bleseed one enjoying infinite merit. He is to be honoured on earth.' The mark of a *jīvanmukta* is the absence of the 'I' or 'my' in the body which is with him like a shadow. He sees all things with an equal eye however differentiated they be in their qualities. He is fearless as his mind is engrossed in Brahman. All sense objects are merged in him and lose their identity like rivers flowing into the ocean. He is not subject to the forces of *saṁsāra* as before. All vāsanas become stilled in him. Even the reference to *prārabdha* supporting the jīvanmukta's body is only from the empirical or vyāvahāric point of view. The *jñāni* is unconcerned about the fate of the body. Coming out of his *samādhi* state, he exclaims: 'By my understanding the oneness of Brahman and Ātman, my mind has ceased to function; its modifications have been stilled. I know neither this, nor yonder. I am not able to fathom the nature of the bliss which I now enjoy.' He asks: 'Where has this universe gone? By whom has it been led? It was seen by me ere now; but it is not. What a wonder!'. He sees the universe not in its variety, and the distinction of "I" and "this" has vanished for him. He is not grieved nor is he pleased by objects. He is not attached nor is he detached. He sports and delights in the Self ever content with the elexir of incessant bliss. 'Feeding care-free without a sense of humiliation, drinking the waters of rivers, remaning in freedom, without restraint, sleeping without fear in the cremation ground or in the forest, clad in clothes unwashed and undried, or which may be the directions as a *digambara*, sleeping on the ground or wandering in the highways of the Upaniṣads, the wise sport in the Supreme Brahman. They roam about like a child, or one mad or as one dumb. The wise man always enjoying bliss goes sometimes as a fool, sometimes as one learned, sometimes with royal magnificence, sometimes as mad, sometimes as auspicious, sometimes unmoving as a python, sometimes evoking respect, sometimes derided and sometimes

unknown to anybody. Though devoid of wealth, he is ever content; strong though helpless; though not eating, ever satisfied; beyond comparison. Let his body fall anywhere like the leaf of a tree. Of the *yati* who is Brahman the body has already been burnt by his *cidāgni*, the fire of intelligence. For such a one, there is no consideration of space or time, or appropriateness in discarding his body.' In fact, he has no sense of agency in discarding it; it falls off of its own accord when there is no more *prārabdha* to sustain it. These are some of the ways in which Śrī Śaṅkara speaks of the *jīvanmukta*.

kadācit sattvasthah kvacidapi rajovrttigataḥ
tamovrittih kvapi tṛtaya rahitaḥ kva ca punaḥ
kadācit samsāri srutipatha vihāri kvaciodaho
munir na vyāmaham bhajati gurudīkṣā kṣata tamaḥ.

'Sometimes the *jīvanmukta* is in the *sattva* attitude (bright and good); at other times he is disposed towards *rajas* (moderately good and moderately evil, light and darkness mixed); sometimes he is engaged in *samsāra*, worldly affairs; sometimes he delights in Vedic pursuits. The sage with his tendencies towards the dark erased by the grace of his Guru never falls into infatuation.'

kvacinmaunasthaḥ kvacidapi vāgvāda nirataḥ
kādācitsānandam hasitarabhasastyakta vacanaḥ
kadācit lokānam vyavahrti samālokanaparo
munirna vyāmoham bhajati gurudīksākṣata tamaḥ.

Sometimes he is firm in his silence; sometimes he is devoted to wordy warfare; sometimes he laughs enthusiastically with no speech; sometimes he is thinking of the affairs of the world. The sage thus lives with the infatuation removed by the grace of his Guru.

nindati kimapi na yogī
nandati kimvāparam kimapyantaḥ
candana sītala hṛdayaḥ
kandalitānandamantaraḥ svāste

The yogi blames nothing nor does he extol anything within himself. His heart is cool like sandal paste, with bliss residing in him like the tender shoots of a plant.

na niṣedati doṣa dhiyā
gunabudhyā vā na kincidātte
āvidyakamakhilamiti
jñatvodāste muni kopi.

He rejects nothing attributing an evil to it, nor does he accept anything seeing good in it. Both are to him related to *avidyā*, and he therefore is indifferent to both.

santyajati nopapannam
nāsampannam vāncati kvāpi
svasthaḥ sete yatirāt
antaram ānandam anubhavam ekaḥ

He rejects nothing that comes to him. Nor does he crave for anything to come to him. The sage rests in solitariness, contented in himself experiencing bliss inside him.

The question of the relation of *karma* to *jīvanmukti* may be considered here. It would appear that in the preparatory stages of the attainment of *jīvanmukti, karma* has a part to play by way of bringing about *citta-śuddi* or purity of mind. A person constantly engaged in the performance of ordained religious duties has no inclination or time to think of, and much less, to do prohibited things, and his mind becomes pure. A pure mind alone is the fit instrument for acquisition of knowledge preceded by detachment or *vairāgya* and the cultivation of the appropriate moral qualities. But, once the virtues have been acquired and the mind has become pure, *karma* is no more needed. As ordained by Śrī Śaṅkara in the *Upadeśa Pancaka,* the stages to *jīvanmukti* begin with learning of the Vedas and the performance of the karmas oridained in them to please God thereby, the abandonment of all desire, the liquidation of all sins, the realisation that the so-called joys of the world militate against spiritual benefit, developing the longing to realise the Ātman, and getting out of the home quickly, completely giving up all karmas. Because the karmas arise and are sustained by the predicament of the doer and the deed, it is duality-oriented and is disruptive of the sense of oneness. That is also the case with reference to *bhakti* or devotion. *Bhakti* too requires the predicament of the devotee and the Deity. In mystic union this duality—consciousness is annulled and the perfection of the union bears the marks of

a unity in which everything is God, and the devotee loses his separate individuality. But there are miles to go before a devotee becomes a mystic, before a *bhakta* becomes a *yukta*.

That is why Śrī Śaṅkara insists that neither *karma* nor *bhakti*, valuable as they may be as preparatary to *ātmajñāna*, cannot be proximate means to it. *Karma* is *puruṣa tantra*, depending on human effort, to do, to undo and to alter (*kartum*, *akartum*, *anyathākartum*). It has reference to the production of a non-existing thing, getting something, going to a place, to modify and to sanctify an object. But *Ātma-vijñāna* is not such an object that lends itself to these processes. It relates to an ever-existing state of perfection. Knowing the Ātman as one with Brahman is *vastutantram*, depending on the object, not the man. That is because the Ātman or Brahman is a *sidda-vastu*, what *is* already and ever in a state of perfection, not needing to be purified or sanctified. Action and knowledge, *karma* and *jñāna* are opposed to each other. *Bhakti*, too, which speaks of attaining salvation as a *future* condition and the transformation of the devotee to approximate to the Deity, thrives on a persisting duality and human effort. That is why Śrī Śaṅkara holds that karma by itself or in association with *bhakti*, or with *jñāna* cannot be of use to *ātmasākṣātkāra*. *Mokṣa* is not an achievable object in the sense explained earlier. *Karma* is action to achieve something. *nāstyakṛtaḥ-kṛtena*, says the *śruti*. Not action, but hearing, meditation and reflecting on the *śruti* texts is the way to realise Brahman, *brahma vit brahmaiva bhavati*. So, the aspirant to *jīvanmukti* has to abjure all actions after a certain stage and live in a state of actionlessness. The same applies to *bhaki*. It also thrives on a predicament of duality. Necessary and valuable as it is as an aid to concentration and to invoke divine grace, being directed, in the language of the Advaitin, to Saguṇa-Brahman, it cannot be the ultimate means to *ātmasākṣātkāra*, the realisation of Ātman-Brahman equation. This is not however to belittle its value in the scheme of spiritual life being the stuff of sainthood. Yet, on the premise that liberation from the shackles of *saṁsāra* is dependent on true insight into the nature of the jīva shorn of the limiting adjuncts wrought by *avidyā*, *jñāna* alone must necessarily be the final means to *mu ti* as enunciated in the dictum, *jñānādeva kaivalyam*. The significance of the Lord's averment in the *Gītā*, *jñāni tu ātmaiva me matam* should not be missed,. Śrī Śaṅkara is emphatic that by *jñāna* alone is *mokṣa* secured, not otherwise, or by

combination of *jñāna* with some other means: *tasmāt kevalādeva jñānāt mokṣaḥ iti eṣa arthaḥ niscitaḥ gītāsu sarvopaniṣatsu ca.*

As regards the question if the jīvanmukta voluntarily engages in any *karma*, the Lord says:

yastu ātmaratireva syāt ātma tṛptasca mānavaḥ
ātmanyeva ca santuṣṭaḥ tasya kāryam na vidyate.

'But the man who rejoices in the Self, is satisfied with the Self, and is centred in the Self, for him, verily, there is no obligatory duty'; for action is to get what one does not have and out of desire for it. But the *jīvanmukta* has no desire being *sarvato vīta tṛṣṇah.* Even when perforce he has to do some action, he does it without attachment to it and to its results. The *jīvanmukta* state is only of *being* and not of *doing.*

From the foregoing discussion of the place of *karma* in *jīvanmukti*, it would seem that the *sannyāsin* who has renounced the world is alone capable of attaining it. The *mumukṣu,* the one who desires *mokṣa,* which desire, by the way, is generically different from desire for earthly joys, withdraws from the world in order to obtain *tattvajñāna* and the *sannyāsa* that he thus assumes is called *vividiṣā sannyāsa.* Getting, in due course, the knowledge of the Ātman, he continues in it, and, it is called *vidvat-sannyāsa. Ātma-vicāra* is a whole-time business, and cannot be interspersed with other activities like *gurususrūṣa* in Brahmacarya, or domestic and other religious duties in Gṛḥastāś-rama or the *dāmpatya* of Vānaprastāśrama. If it is urged that great kings like Janaka attained *mukti* still being addicted to *karma,* Bhagavān's words '*karmaṇaiva hi samsiddhim āstthitāḥ janakādayah*' are explained by Śrī Śaṅkara as meanting '*aprāpta samyagdarśanāḥ janakādayaḥ tadā sattva suddi sādana bhūtena krameṇa samsiddhimāsthitāḥ*'. Janaka and others not having achieved *ātma-darśana* attained perfection by *karma* which was the means to purity of mind.

Incidentally, Swāmi Niscaladāśa in his *Vicārasāgara* raises the question: "What happens to an enlightened jīva in whose case the karma produces a succession of bodies. Karma is of two kinds, one which produces one body only, another which produces a succession of bodies. Where a karma produces a succession of bodies, even though jñāna may arise in the first of these series, yet. the succeeding

bodies also will occur for the jñāni as the fruits of that karma. For, the prārabdhakarma is not liquidated except by subjection to it. Śri Niscaladāśa replies: "It is true that the consequential series of bodies arise due to karma and there is no further body after completion prārabdha. But jñāna worth the name which will confer jīvanmuti will arise only after all the impediments of prārabdhakarma have been removed. Therefore, the jīva will acquire liberation in life only in the ultimate janma in the series caused by prarābdha after which there will be no body. That is because there is no occasion for a further janma after this. The jñāni's prāṇas do not go out to some other world or into some other body in this world. But his prāṇas, anthahkaraṇa and his sense organs get stilled in this body itself. Without the movement of the prāṇas outside the body, there can be no acquiring of another body. For, the Śruti says: *na tasya prāṇā utkrāmante atra brahma śamśnute.* Therefore, it is not right to say that there arises another body for the jñāni after the liquidation of the present body due to the remaining prārabdha. Further, as the Lord said, *jñānagniḥ sarva karmāṇi bhasma sāt kurute.* The fire of jñāna turns all karmas to ashes.

The means or sādhanas to *jīvanmukti* are said to be *tattvajñāna, manonāśa* and *vāsanākṣaya.* Śri Vidyāraṇyasvāmi insists that these should be acquired *all together* and not individually or separately. The path to jīvanmukti is marked by the following seven stages. *Subheccha, Vicāraṇā, Tanumānasā, Sattvāpatti, Asamśakti, Padarthābhāvani* and *Turyagā.*

These are explained briefly as follows :

(1.) *Śubhecchā :* When a man involved in the world about him begins to reflect and tells himself: "What a fool am I to be thus involved! Should I not study the śāstras and be dowered with the saving glance of good persons who have the experience of the Truth?" Such a desire preceded by a sense of detachment (*vairāgya*) is called *Subheccha.*

(2) *Vicāraṇā* is active *inquiry* into the nature of Reality preceded by study of the śāstras, association with the good and the wise, vairāgya and meditation.

(3) *Tanumānasā* arises when the attachment to sense-objects get tenuous as a result of *subhecchā* and *vicāraṇā*.

(4.) *Sattvāpatti* is the stage of the establishment of the mind in the Ātman characterised by pure *sattva-guṇa* by virtue of the previous three and by non-attachment to sense-objects.

(5.) *Asaṃśakti* is the stage in which the effect of attachment to the world is negated by the practice of the previous four stages and which is characterised by being rooted in the Real.

(6.) *Padārthābhāvinī:* When by the practice of the aforesaid five stages, a person delights in his Ātman as nothing else internal or external appears to him and he is awakened only by long effort of others, that is the stage of padarthābhavinī.

(7.) *Turyagā:* By long practice of these six stages, when the sense of difference vanishes and one is completely absorbed in one's Self, that is the goal of *turyagā*.

The first three of the bhūmikas (ascending stages of spirituality) are only means (sādhanas) to *Brahmavidyā* and are parts of the effort to acquire *vidyā*. For, in these three the sense of difference among things is not annulled. Hence, it is allied the waking state (*jagaraṇa*).

Then the intellectual realisation from the *Vedānta* text of the oneness of Brahman and the jīvātman freed of upādhis is the fourth stage and is the result of the previous three. It is called Sattvāpatti. Brahman which is the material cause of the entire universe is known to be the non-dual Reality. Name and form which are the features of the universe and which are superimposed on Brahman are understood to be *mithyā* in this stage. This stage is like unto a dream (*svapna*) to the seeker of salvation contrasted with the waking state mentioned earlier. For, the objects of experience are felt to have only as much reality as those in a dream. In that state all sense of duality disappears, and one becomes steadfast in the non-dual, seeing oneself and others as the Real only. One who has this fourth *bhūmikā* is said to be a *Brahmavit*.

The three bhūmikās beginning with the fifth are the distinctions among the jīvanmuktas. These distinctions arise due to relative

effectiveness of *nirvikalpa-samādhi* and to the strength and duration of absorption in Brahman.

In the fifth stage, one wakes of one's own accord from *nirvikalpa-samādhi.* Such a yogin is *Brahmavidvara.* This is likened to sleep (*suṣupti*). In it, all determinants are stilled and one has the awareness of only the non-dual. Though prone to external activity when awake, being introvert and enjoying supreme tranquillity, one appears as one in sleep.

In the sixth stage, the yogin gets up awakened by persons who are near him. Such a one is called *Brahmavidvarīyan.* This is likened to very deep sleep (*gāḍhanidra*). One attains it after practising the fifth *bhūmikā* and getting rid of the residual tendencies (vāsanas). There is no consciousness of *sat* or *asat,* no sense of the 'I' or the *ahaṁkāra.* All mental activities vanish. Like a pot in space, there is nothing inside or outside, and again like a pot immersed in the ocean there is a fullness inside and outside. The former state arises as the mind of one in *nirvikalpa-samadhi* is left only with remnants of samskāras of duality and cannot function to indulge in any imagination or to receive impressions of external objects. The latter is to be traced to the fact that one in that condition is lost in the plenum of the experience of Brahman which is self-effulgent and is *sat, cit* and *ānanda,* whole and entire. He sees both within himself and outside all things only as Brahman. The one makes for *śūnyatva,* and the other for *pūrṇatva.*

To the yogin who has attained the seventh *bhūmikā,* there is no getting up either by oneself or induced by others. The Yogaśāstras which explain *asamprajñāta samādhi* culminate in this. Such a yogin is called *Brahmavidvariṣṭha.*

The one great danger that the *jīvanmukta* has to guard against is negligence. Śrī Śaṅkara says:

> *pramādo brahmaniṣṭhāyām na kartavyaḥ kadācana*
> *pramādo mṛtyurityāha bhaghāvan brahmaṇassutaḥ*

The sage Sanatsujāta told Dhṛtaraṣtra

> *pramādam vai mṛtyumaham bravīmi*

'I call negligence itself as death'. It is so subserve of brahmaniṣṭḥa. For, it brings about a succession of evils.

na pramādādanartho'nyo jñāninaḥ svasvarūpataḥ
tato mohastatohamdhīḥ tato bandhastato vyathā.

There is nothing which is the undoing of a *jñāni* like negligence. From it arises delusion. That leads to *ahaṁkāra*. Thence arises all misery. Śrī Śaṅkara compares the downward course which negligence brings about to a ball falling down the stairs by its own momentum. Such negligence starts from the attraction of sense objects. The mind attached to sense objects thinks of their qualities; by such strong thinking about them, desire for them arises, and desire leads to action regarding them. Due to that, a man gets deflected from his real nature; thus he falls down; for one who has fallen down, there is no going up.

viṣayeṣvaviśacchetah saṁkalpayati tadguṇān
samyaksaṁkalpanāt kāmah kāmātpumsaḥ pravṛtanam
tatah svarūpa vibhramsaḥ vipraṣtastu patatyadhaḥ
patitasya vināṅāsam punarnāroha īkṣyate

yadākadā vāpi vipascideṣaḥ
brahmaṇyanantepyaṇumātrabhedam
paśyatyamuṣya bhayam tadeva
yadīkṣitam bhinnatayā pramādāt.
(Vivekacūdāmaṇi)

If at any time the wise man sees even the minutest difference in the infinite Brahman, that itself seen by inadvertance becomes to him the source of fear. The *jīvaumukta* who has come out of his samādhi has to be ever on the alert with all his thoughts centred on Brahman and seeing everything as Brahman. Such a *jīvanmukta* acquires *sarvātmabhāva* identitying himself with the whole universe. This identification is reciprocal. Sage Śuka was going out in the woods, and his father called out to him. Upon that, all the trees in the forest are said to have sounded in response.

The Advaitic idea of *jīvanmukti* has been criticised by upholders of other Vedāntic systems. But all of them have criticised it from their

own thories of Brahman, *jīva* and *mokṣa* and the means to it. The point is to see the question from Advaitic premises. Given these premises that Brahman has the *svarūpa-lakṣaṇa* of *sat, cit* and *ānanda*, that it is of the nature of *prajñāna*, that the Ātman as *vibhu* is equated with Brahman, that bondage in *saṁsāra* is the result of *avidyā* or nescience, and that the removal of it by *jñāna* results in liberation, *jīvanmukti* follows necessarily from these premises. There is no point in refuting it on non-Advaitic grounds.

Moreover, to export vyāvahāric considerations into the Pāramārthic realm and criticise the futility of *jīvanmukti* thereby is a misapplication of reason. This is illustrated in the argument in a recent book 'Studies in Rāmānuja Vedānta" by Dr. S. R. Bhat, Reader in Philosophy, University of Delhi in which he says:

> "One finds it (Śankara's system) too sweeping to retain individual existence and initiative, which a man of experience values the most. Such a theory which declares obliteration of the individual self as the ultimate goal of life, paralyses our energies at the very source. It provides no satisfaction for the individuals who shrink into the position of a helpless prey of *māyā*, rather than being active cooperators with God in the spiritual enterprise. It is not only morally enervating and discouraging but also speculatively dissatisfying."

In this diatribe against Advaita, the author finds that Vedānta and Pāñcarātra are strange bedfellows, saying that the latter is wedded to Advaitism in spite of its instinctive theism, and vacillates between the two.

The fear of all non-Advaitins in respect of *mukti* of the *jīva* is the loss of individual existence and non-continuation of personality in *mukti*. On the premise that the *jīva* has a separate existence of its own, being atomic or *aṇu*, whether such separation is distinct or distinguishable, that the relation between the *jīva* and the Absolute is an external relation of dependence, and that the world too has such an externality to God, whole or partial, it is understandable that the author pleads for 'spiritual enterprise in active cooperation with God'. But all this will be beside the point in view of the Advaitic stand of the jīva's identity with Brahman expressed in the

dictum *ayam ātmā brahma.* The theist says: I wish to taste and enjoy sugar-candy; the Advaitin says: I am sugar-candy itself. The one wishes to eat the cake and have it, the other sees nothing but the cake.

Further, to say that Advaita is "not only morally enervating and discouraging but also speculatively dissatisfying" is to miss the moral and spiritual implications of the system. Morality and religion as factors of the spiritual pilgrimage of the Advaitin, both in the preparatory stage and in the stage of fruition, are very much there in Advaita. What is moral endeavour in the pre-*jīvanmukta* stage becomes non-moral activity for the *jīvanmukta* who sets the norms of morality unconsciously. If the purpose of the spiritual endeavour is to achieve *mukti,* the steps detailed in Śri Śaṅkara's *Upadeśa-pañcaka* enumerate the moral and spiritual disciplines for the attainment of *niśreyasa.* Any morality which is worthwhile cannot be based on purely worldly or secular foundation, but must have a background of the spiritual, and lead to a spiritual consummation. To deny moral considerations and directives in Advaita using the epithets "enervating, discouraging and dissatisfying" is to write, not from ignorance, but from prejudice. All the elements of what Dr. Bhatt calls "cooperating with God in the spiritual enterprise" are prescribed in Advaita for the non-*jīvanmukta* while he is alive and it becomes automatic for the *jīvanmukta* in his *vyutthāna* condition and for whom morality is no more an *obligation,* but as *natural* as breathing or circulation of blood. It is no more a case of *ought,* but of *is.*

To talk of loss of personality and individuality in Advaitic mukti is to attach an undue importance to our jīvāhood with its mental and bodily appurtenances and crave for a transcendental persistence of empirical joys. Theology may promise it, but philosophy will not permit it.

Another question that is raised is: Of what use to the world are these *jīvanmuktas?* They might have secured their own *mokṣa,* but what good do they do to the world? This is a question which many people ask, contrasting the *jīvanmukta* with people who engage themselves in what goes by the name of social service. This takes us to the social dimension of *jīvanmukti.* A *jīvanmukta* is an enlightened person, a *virakta* who has conquered his passions,

and is at peace with himself. As such, he is at peace with the entire world and is characterised by universal benevolence and good will. His look is a benediction; his words are wisdom; and his conduct a consecration. In his presence, all physical and mental ills disappear in the sense that their edge is blunted and one becomes able to bear them with fortitude. Than this, there cannot be a higher service to suffering humanity. They leaven society by their very presence and raise its moral and spiritual tone. They are really the benefactors of mankind in a truer and more purposeful sense than any number of people engaged, honestly and sincerely as it may be, in acts of social service. It is only those who have scaled the vertical heights of the Spirit that can generate public weal to the greatest horizontal extent without consciously intending to do so. Have we not seen in recent times Bhagavān Ramaṇa, a jīvamukta in *sahaja samādhi* effecting, by his very presence, a Copernican revolution withdrawing men's minds from things material and centering them on the Ātman? For, as the great men have taugt us, the happiness which the pursuit of worldly things and the removal of physical ills will give us is neither unmixed nor lasting, and is nothing when compared to the peace and bliss of *ātmalābha* exemplified by these jīvanmuktas and the radiance of equanimity and universal love which emanates from them. In fact, as the Śruti recommends in the words: *tasmāt ātmajñam hi abhyarcayet bhūtikāmaḥ*, even for the worldly prosperity, one should seek it from a man of Self-realisation who has it in his power to bestow it without consciously endeavouring or appearing to do so. For, by his very presence in society like all saintly personages, he wafts the fragrance of the Spirit far and wide, and helps to dispel the ills of body and mind that afflict men about him. And, all the world over in every age, have we not seen countless instances of the victory of the Spirit over Matter?

As the *Yoga Sūtra* has it, *ahimsa pratishṭhāyām tatsannidhau vairatyāgaḥ*, in the face of ahimsa all enemity and violence vanish as they are given up totally. A *jīvanmukta* who is a *sannyāsin* has cultivated and promised *abhaya* to all creatures, man, beast, bird and worm, ensuring universal welfare. The ills of mankind are only bodily ills, for, the mind too is part of the body according to us. They

cannot be escaped, being brought on by *karma*. If they are mitigated or appear annulled by human agency, it may bring satisfaction for the time being. That will not give enduring benefit. A true benefactor of mankind is he who negates not the *fact* of suffering, but a *sense* of it by helping and teaching to cultivate an understanding of its ultimate source and how to react to it holding it in its proper perspective. This is the meaning of Bhagavān Ramaṇa Maharṣi asking people who go to him with the tale of their woes and telling him : "I suffer" to find out who is the "I" that is said to suffer.

The *jīvanmukta* is the friend of all creatures, *sarvabhūta suhṛt, maitraḥ, karuno eva ca*. The six enemies of man, desire, anger, covetousness, sense of strength, delusion and jealousy (*kāma, krodha, lobha, mada, moha* and *mātsarya*) are the causes of misery in the world, individually and collectively. They disappear in the presence of a *jīvanmukta*. He has in him to confer peace and tranquility on all. It is wrong to believe that a *jīvanmukta* is interested only in his own personal salvation or liberation, however it is called. It may be true of the *videha-mukta*, particularly of other faiths and philosophies, not of the *jīvanmukta*. By the fact of his continuing to live even after *mukti* and by the way he leads his life, he gives the lie direct to this charge. The *jīvanmukta*, when he is in the *vyuāthāna* state is full of consideration for suffering men groaning by the ills brought on by their karmas or by the cruelties of others who play with their fortunes. They do what all they could by prayer and sympathy, a kind word and a soothing touch to mitigate the intensity of the victim's ailments of body and mind. As Śri Umāpati Śivācariar has it in his *Tiruvarutpayan* கள்ளத் தலைவர்துயர் கருதி தாம் கருணை வெள்ளத் தார்மிக : reflecting on the sorrows of others, they are actuated by a flood of compassion. As Bacon said, the nobler a person is, the kinder does he become.

The happiness of man and the peace of the world cannot be secured in Congresses and Conferences, in Seminars and Symposia, in the Chancellories and Secretariats, at diplomatic meetings and in United Nations auspices. We have waited for these for long years even after the end of the Second World War. Man cannot abolish war from the globe unless he divinises himself. It is enough if, of the

millions, there are about a handful of holy men *sthitaprajñāḥ*, *jīvanmuktāḥ* to waft the fragrance of goodness, love and peace all round. They answer our prayers, remove our doubts, confer benefits on us, and fill our hearts with a balm and our souls with a joy more abundant and lasting than we can ever dream of. The *jīvanmuktas* are the true benefactors of mankind, and we may be sure that they will appear from time to time in the history of the human race to exhort the world by their precept and guide it by their example. Leaving their footprints on the sands of Time, they show the way to make our lives sublime.